

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00
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R 131335Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9778
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BONN 11537

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, WB, GW, GE, US, UK, UR, FR
SUBJECT: FRG/GDR "SOUNDINGS" UNDERWAY-SORT OF

REFS: (A) USBER 1758; (B) USBER 1677 (NOTAL);
(C) BERLIN 6263; (D) USBER 1397; (E) BONN 9147;
(F) BONN 8762; (G) BONN 7935; (H) BERLIN 6030

SUMMARY: ERNST STERN, THE CHIEF OF THE BERLIN
AND FRG/GDR SECTION OF THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE HAS
CONFIRMED TO EMBOFF THAT SCHMIDT RECENTLY SENT HONECKER
A LETTER EXPRESSING THE FRG'S READINESS TO BEGIN
FRG/GDR NEGOTIATIONS. THE NEXT STEP IS FOR THE GDR
TO REPLY, AFTER WHICH WISCHNEWSKI WILL APPROACH GDR
REPRESENTATIVE KOHL IN ORDER TO WINNOW SPECIFIC AREAS
FOR DISCUSSION. PRESENT PLANS ARE FOR GAUS THEN TO
CONDUCT THE NEGOTIATIONS. STERN ALSO SAID THE
NEGOTIATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO BE LONG AND TEDIOUS, THAT
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ENERGY SUPPLY TO BERLIN IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE
AND DOUBTED REPORTS THAT THE USSR WISHES TO REDUCE
FRG/GDR TRADE. END SUMMARY

1. IN A CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF JULY 11, ERNST STERN,
CHIEF OF THE BERLIN AND FRG/GDR SECTION OF THE
CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE, SAID THAT THE LONG AWAITED FRG

"SOUNDINGS" WITH THE GDR HAD TAKEN PLACE, AFTER A FASHION. HE CITED AND CONFIRMED THE TRUTH OF PRESS REPORTS OF JULY 7 TO THE EFFECT THAT CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT HAD WRITTEN SED CHIEF HONECKER EXPRESSING THE FRG'S READINESS TO BEGIN BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS AND SAID THAT THE FRG REGARDED THESE AS THE INITIAL "SOUNDINGS." STERN DID NOT ELABORATE ON THE CONTENTS OF SCHMIDT'S LETTER, SAYING THAT THIS WAS GOING ON AT SUCH A HIGH LEVEL THAT HE WAS NOT PRIVY TO FURTHER DETAILS. STERN SAID THAT MINISTER OF STATE WISCHNEWSKI WAS AT THE MOMENT ON VACATION IN THE BLACK FOREST BUT, IF THE GDR RESPONSE TO SCHMIDT'S LETTER WAS POSITIVE, HE WOULD RETURN IMMEDIATELY IN ORDER TO PURSUE THE SECOND STAGE OF CONTACTS WITH GDR REPRESENTATIVE KOHL.

2. STERN CONFIRMED THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE FRG AS TO HOW THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE CONDUCTED, BUT SAID THAT PRESENT PLANS WERE FOR WISCHNEWSKI TO WINNOW WITH KOHL THE TOPICS WHICH THE FRG WANTED TO NEGOTIATE AND THEREAFTER LEAVE THE NEGOTIATIONS ON TOPICS THE GDR IS PREPARED TO TREAT TO FRG REPRESENTATIVE GAUS IN EAST BERLIN AND INsofar AS THE STRICTLY BERLIN PROBLEMS ARE CONCERNED, TO THE BERLIN SENAT. HE SAID THAT IT WAS NATURAL FOR WISCHNEWSKI, AS A "NEW MAN" ON THE JOB, TO WISH TO ASSUME CONFIDENTIAL

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RESPONSIBILITY FOR A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BUT THAT IT HAD BEEN DECIDED TO DIVIDE THE RESPONSIBILITY BETWEEN WISCHNEWSKI ON THE ONE HAND AND GAUS AND THE SENAT ON THE OTHER IN A TEMPORAL, NOT SUBJECT-MATTER, FASHION. HE NOTED THAT THIS IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHAT THE ALLIED AMBASSADORS WERE TOLD IN MAY (REF G). HE SAID IT WOULD HAVE BEEN UNFOR-

TUNATE FOR THE FRG IF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GAUS AND WISCHNEWSKI HAD NOT BEEN SETTLED TO MUTUAL SATISFACTION.

3. WITH RESPECT TO THE CURRENT PROSPECTS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, STERN SAID THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO FORETELL. HE CITED A RADIO COMMENTARY BY THE SOVIET RADIO PEACE AND PROGRESS WHICH WAS SUBSEQUENT TO THE SCHMIDT LETTER AND WHICH LISTED THE VARIOUS TOPICS SUCH AS NATIONALITY, BORDER QUESTIONS, ETC. (WHICH THE FRG HAS ALREADY MADE CLEAR ARE NON-NEGOTIABLE) AS PROPER SUBJECTS OF DISCUSSION. IF THE GDR PLANS TO INSIST ON TYING THESE MATTERS TO PROGRESS ON OTHER ISSUES, HE SAID PROSPECTS ARE NOT VERY BRIGHT. WHEN REMINDED THAT THE GDR MFA HAD TOLD

US THAT THERE WAS NO "JUNKTIM" (LINKAGE) BETWEEN THE TWO AREAS (REF H) HE SAID THAT THE FRG HAD RECEIVED THE SAME SIGNAL SHORTLY AFTER WE HAD. IN THE LIGHT OF THIS, HE EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT THE PLANNED NEGOTIATIONS HAVE SOMETHING OF THE MAKING OF A POKER GAME.

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HOWEVER, HE SECD THAT THE ONLY THING THE FRG CAN OFFER THE GDR IS MONEY, AND THE FRG IS PREPARED TO DO SO, BUT THAT THE GDR HAS A HISTORY OF NOT SELLING POLITICAL CONCESSIONS FOR MONEY. IN ANY CASE, THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO BE LONG AND TEDIOUS.

4. AS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUES TO BE NEGOTIATED, STERN SAID THAT ENERGY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT, SINCE IT IS VITAL TO BERLIN WHILE THE HAMBURG/BERLIN AUTOBAHN IS ONLY USEFUL. BERLIN'S ENERGY SUPPLY IS REGARDED AS ADEQUATE UNTIL 1985 BUT SERIOUS PROBLEMS WILL ENSUE IF NEW SOURCES ARE NOT DEVELOPED BY THEN. HE SAID THAT THE GDRHHEGARDS THIS AS A POLITICAL MATTER, WISHING TO BE THE SOLE NEW OUTSIDE SUPPLIER OF ENERGY TO WEST BERLIN IN ORDER TO INCREASE DEPENDEN-

DENCE OF WEST BERLIN ON THE GDR, AND DOUBTED THAT THE FRG WILLINGNESS TO CONSTRUCT A POWER LINE BETWEEN THE FRG AND BERLIN WOULD SUCCEED, EVEN THOUGH THE FRG
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IS PREPARED TO PAY DOUBLE THE COST. AS WHAT HE TERMED PERSONAL SPECULATION, HE SAID THAT ONE POSSIBLE SOLUTION MIGHT LEAD TO INTERNATIONALIZE THE PROBLEM BY CONSTRUCTING A GRID WHICH WOULD INCLUDE BERLIN, THE FRG, THE GDR, POLAND AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA. IN ANY CASE, THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW POWER GENERATING FACILITIES IN WEST BERLIN MUST CONTINUE IN SPITE OF THE OPPOSITION OF SOME LOCAL CITIZENS.

5. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT REPORTS THAT THE USSR WISHED TO REDUCE FRG/GDR TRADE, STEEN SAID THAT HE COULD NOT SPEAK AUTHORITATIVELY BUT DOUBTED THAT THEY WERE ACCURATE. HE SAID THAT THE GDR IS A DISPLAY CASE FOR THE SOVIETS AND THAT A REDUCTION OF THE STANDARD OF LIVING THERE WOULD REFLECT ON THE ENTIRE BLOC. IN ADDITION, THE GDR IS A SOURCE OF HARD CURRENCY FOR THE BLOC. WHAT THE GDR HAS SOUGHT TO DO, HE SAID, IS TO INCREASE ITS TRADE WITH OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES AND REDUCE FRG TRADE RELATIVE TO OTHER TRADE WITH THE WEST. WHEN THE GDR'S TRADE WITH THE WEST WAS SOME 25-30 PERCENT OF TOTAL GDR TRADE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE FRG ENJOYED ABOUT HALF OF THAT TRADE. NOW THAT THE WEST ACCOUNTS FOR ABOUT ONE-THIRD OR MORE OF THE GDR'S TRADE, INNER-GERMAN TRADE IS ONLY ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF THE GDR'S WESTERN TRADE. HE SAID THAT THE GDR, AS A RESULT OF THE LONG PERIOD WHEN IT WAS AN INTERNATIONAL PARIAH, SOMETIMES SEEMS TO BE MORE INTERESTED IN THE FORM THAN THE SUBSTANCE OF ITS CONTACTS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

6. COMMENT: SCHMIDT'S LETTER IS AN UNEXPECTED DEVELOPMENT, AND ONE WHICH IS PROBABLY OCCASIONED BY REPORTED GDR DISPLEASURE ABOUT THE FRG'S DELAY IN
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MOVING FORWARD ON THE MUCH-VAUNTED COMMENCEMENT OF THE INITIAL APPROACHES TO THE GDR. OTHER THAN THE SCHMIDT LETTER, THE PLANNED SCENARIO (WHICH MAY OF COURSE CHANGE) IS AS WISCHNEWSKI ORIGINALLY DESCRIBED IT TO THE AMBASSADORS. HOWEVER, THIS IS SOMETHING OF A CHANGE FROM FRG SPOKESMAN GRUENEWALD'S STATEMENT

THAT HE WOULD NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT SOME OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE ON THE WISCHNEWSKI/KOHL LEVEL (REF E). THE FRG PROBABLY WANTS TO MOVE MATTERS ALONG VERY QUICKLY FROM THIS POINT ON, IF WISCHNEWSKI'S WILLINGNESS TO CUT SHORT HIS VACATION IS ANY INDICATION, AND TO SHOW VISIBLE PROGRESS IN THE COMMENCEMENT OF NEGOTIATIONS. IN SO DOING, HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO BE FACED WITH OPPOSITION CDU INSISTENCE THAT THE FRG OBTAIN POLITICAL (E.G. HUMAN RIGHTS) CONCESSIONS IN EXCHANGE FOR MONEY PAID TO THE GDR SO FUTURE PROGRESS WILL PROBABLY BE UNDRAMATIC AND SLOW.

7. THE DEFINITION OF "SOUNDINGS" DEPENDS ON THE EAR OF THE BEHOLDER. IN A JULY 12 BONN GROUP MEETING, FRG REP (HENZE) SAID HE DID NOT CONSIDER SCHMIDT'S LETTER TO CONSTITUTE "SOUNDINGS" SINCE THESE INVOLVE A DESCRIPTION OF SPECIFIC AREAS OR TOPICS FOR NEGOTIATION, WHICH HE BELIEVES (WITHOUT KNOWING THE CONTENT OF THE LETTER) THAT THE LETTER DID NOT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 13-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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